

City of Philadelphia: Safe Return to Work Guidelines (Green Phase)

Philadelphians are working hard to turn back COVID-19, and they are succeeding. Because of their commitment to social distancing and compliance with the stay-at-home order, as of mid-May 2020, daily COVID-19 case counts had fallen to about half those of mid-April and continue to decline. **Because of this, Philadelphia will begin to transition to the Green Phase of re-opening beginning on July 3, 2020.**

Despite this transition, COVID-19 will not be eradicated from the region in the near future, and if Philadelphians—and City government—simply resume their previous activities now, the epidemic will resurge. As public servants, we must lead by example and take precautions consistently to protect not only our employees, but the residents we serve. Ensuring a Safe Return to Work will continue to be a shared responsibility between City Departments, employees and the public.

As with the Yellow Phase guidelines, the primary objective of the City's Safe Return to Work plan is to continue to bring City employees back to work in a phased manner, based on a prioritized schedule that aligns with City and State guidelines for the safe reopening of various businesses and industries, while minimizing the potential for the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

The following document provides specific reopening guidance for City operations that may be able to open or expand operations as the City begins to move to the Green Phase, as described in the Health Department's Green Phase Plan: [Reopening with Care: Philadelphia's Strategy for Moving to Green](#). If at any point the City must move back to a more restrictive phase, the City will reinstitute the protocols for that phase.

While the City's safety precautions will vary by activity, our general Safety Checklist includes:

- ✓ **Masks** – block the virus from spreading from infected persons by wearing masks and requiring others to wear them
- ✓ **Barriers** – use sneeze guards or plexiglass screens to prevent respiratory droplets expelled by infected persons from reaching others
- ✓ **Isolate** – keep people who might be carrying the virus safely away from others (ideally at home)
- ✓ **Distance** – maintain space between people to reduce the chance that one infected individual will infect others
- ✓ **Reduce crowds** – decrease the number of people than an infected person could pass the virus to if other steps are not successful
- ✓ **Handwashing** – reduce the spread of virus from one person to another from touching contaminated surfaces
- ✓ **Clean** – remove respiratory droplets that may contain virus from surfaces that people may touch

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- ✓ **Planning** – devise a plan for what happens if a City Department is exposed to a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19
- ✓ **Communicate** – ensure staff, customers, and others taking part in permitted activities understand this Safety Checklist

The City will adhere to this safety checklist at all times. If an employee develops COVID-19 infection or has a positive test, the City will follow the protocols described in this document to stop the virus from spreading further.

If employees want to report possible health and safety violations in the City of Philadelphia workplace related to COVID-19, they should contact their Department's Safety Officer or Pandemic Coordinator. In addition, the public can report possible health and safety violations observed while accessing City of Philadelphia services by calling 311.

Employees will be expected to adhere to these guidelines and may face discipline, up to and including termination, if found to be in violation of the policies described herein.

Safe Return to Work Guidelines

These guidelines are intended for general application to most City operations. However, employees working in settings where regular and close contact occurs with the public or those who are infected or suspected to be infected with COVID-19 must follow any health and safety protocols established by their Departments.

[HERE](#) you can find Green Phase guidelines for specific types of industries, including libraries, museums, childcare, and personal care businesses, among others.

Additional Guidance on Remote Work During the Green Phase

To ensure the continued safety of our employees and the public, departments that have been conducting some or all of their operations remotely during the Yellow Phase are strongly encouraged to continue conducting such operations remotely and in accordance with the [Virtual Work Policy for City Employees](#). Operations and employees that were not able to work remotely during the Yellow Phase are authorized to commence in-person operations in accordance with these protocols.

When assessing which operations and employees should continue to function remotely, please consider the following:

1. The safety guidelines described herein will be in place for a sustained period of time. Due to this, are you able to deliver your services with employees working remotely or, if needed on-site, in accordance with these policies?
2. What operations and functions can be conducted remotely without impacting overall productivity, efficiency, or service delivery?

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3. Are employees in like job roles or titles (ex: executive assistant, laborer, supervisors, Deputy Commissioners) being handled in a consistent manner with regard to virtual work and on-site work? If not, please ensure that employees in like job roles or titles who can work from home are enabled with the appropriate technology and tools to do so to maintain consistency across titles and/or functions.
4. What level of supervision and/or administrative support is necessary on-site to support the employees in your departments who will be working on-site, while also adhering to these safety guidelines (i.e., maintain required social distancing)?

Protections Needed

✓ Masks

- All employees and members of the public entering City facilities will be required to wear masks in all common areas such as restrooms, conference rooms, lobbies, elevators and hallways, except only:
 - As necessary for the employee to eat or drink during break times. The employee should be seated at least (6) feet from others when taking off mask.
 - When seated alone in a private office or in a cubicle whose sides extend above the head of the employee.
 - If someone else enters an office or cubicle while its occupied by another, all individuals must put on a mask.
- Employees shall follow the City's "Respiratory Guidance for City Employees" found [HERE](#). Employees may bring in their own cloth masks following this guidance. If an employee does not have access to a cloth mask, the Department is required to provide one to the employee or any member of the public entering a City facility without a mask.
- The City will provide one cloth mask to allow for cleaning and ready availability. Those whose jobs involve work hazards will be provided with a respirator consistent with their Departmental hazard assessments and respirator program.

✓ Barriers

- If the office remains open to the public, the Department of Public Property, in coordination with the Department and, in some cases, landlords for leased space, will install plastic/plexiglass barriers between staff and the public in areas most frequented by the public. Those areas include:
 - Lobbies
 - Reception areas
 - Counters with high public engagement

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- Workstations with high public engagement if no other arrangement can be made to conduct business
 - For workers in low cubicles and those who work in open office designs, additional barriers will be installed if needed to extend cubicle walls above workers' heads and to separate those working in spaces with open designs.
- ✓ **Isolate**
- City Departments and employees will continue to follow the Public Health Guidelines on quarantine and isolation found in the City's [current Policy Statement on COVID-19](#).
 - All employees will respond to a daily questionnaire prior to their start of work, administered by their supervisor. The daily questionnaire will be implemented based on the needs of each Department. Guidance on how to access and administer this questionnaire can be found [HERE](#). Select work groups or facilities with higher risk or less means to provide for social distancing, may also be required to undergo temperature checks, in addition to a symptom assessment.
 - Employees with COVID-19 symptoms should call their supervisor and stay home in accordance with the Public Health section of the City's current [Policy Statement on COVID-19](#). Employees who become ill at work must notify their supervisor or appropriate person per the Department's protocol and be sent home immediately. Until the employee is able to leave the site, place the employee in a room or area where they are isolated from others to the extent feasible. The Department may work with the employee to arrange for suitable transportation to a medical treatment facility or residence, as necessary.
 - Current leave usage policies during the COVID-19 pandemic and re-opening can be found in the Leave Usage section of the City's [current Policy Statement on Covid-19](#). Additional guidance for employees on the use of Emergency Paid Sick Leave and FMLA+ can also be found [HERE](#).
- ✓ **Distance**
- Adjust work assignments to ensure employees can stay (6) feet from each other throughout their shifts. If the office remains open to the public, floor decals or other visual signage will be posted by the Department of Public Property, or in the case of leased space, the building landlord, to encourage employees and the public to remain six (6) feet apart. Elevator ridership will be limited to four (4) persons per car as denoted by floor decals and visual signage to encourage adequate distancing.
 - Departments accepting payments from the public are strongly encouraged to use non-contact payment methods, if possible.

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✓ Reduce Crowds

- Employees who can work remotely will be required to do so. Departments will follow the City's "Virtual Work Policy for City Employees" found [HERE](#).
- Departments will be required to stagger work start times and days where possible and must allow for flexible start and end times for staff to comply with these staggered shifts, where appropriate. Employees will be allowed to utilize COVID-excused ("E Time") during times for which they are not scheduled to work due to staggered schedules. For example, if an employee is asked to work a Monday, Wednesday, and Friday schedule and not requested to either work on-site or from home on Tuesday and Thursday, they may utilize COVID-excused time on Tuesday and Thursday.
 - These work schedules must be based upon common area and floor occupancy recommendations provided by the Department of Public Property or landlord for leased space.
 - Base employee shifts and schedules on identified workstation "hot spots." Workstation hot spots are defined as workstations with low panels, benching areas, multi-occupants in private offices, receptionists, etc. Most hot spots are within 6 feet of each other.
 - Drawings with the identified workstation hotspots for each floor will be provided as Departments begin their reopening planning process.
- The Department of Public Property and landlords for leased space will continue to monitor occupancy of City-owned and leased space to ensure proper social distancing is maintained in all common areas. Departments will be expected to continually monitor the occupancy of their own offices to ensure appropriate social distancing is maintained and should report any space limitations requiring possible mitigate to the Department of Public Property.
- Departments must stagger employee break times to ensure adequate social distancing.
- All in-person staff meetings are strongly encouraged to be held virtually, either by phone or via a City-approved virtual platform. Information for Departments to access these virtual platforms can be found [HERE](#).
- If meetings must be held in person during the Green Phase, limit attendees to a maximum of twenty-five (25) and maintain at least (6) feet of distance between attendees.
- All non-essential visitors are prohibited.
- For any public-facing City operation, appointments will be required for the public. Guidance on how to establish an appointment system for your own department can be found [HERE](#).

✓ Handwashing

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- Handwashing or hand sanitizer stations will be placed at building entry and other communal areas for all staff and visitors.
- Handwashing or hand sanitizing will be promoted through [posted signage](#) in restrooms and kitchens.
- Employees will be provided adequate levels of soap supply in all restrooms.
- Departments must provide staff hourly handwashing breaks or, in the case of field operations, adequate hand-sanitizer to enable regular hand cleansing.
- Employees should wash their hands frequently or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when water & soap is not available. Use tissues or the crook of the arm or inner elbow to control coughs, sneezes, and the spread of germs.

✓ Clean

- The Department of Public Property or, in some cases, City Departments or landlord for leased space, will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting all work areas, such as offices, bathrooms, common spaces, and frequently touched surfaces. These cleaning protocols will be conducted prior to re-occupancy and routinely. For building cleaning protocols, contact your Departmental maintenance/facility coordinator.
- Employees are asked to take responsibility for keeping their workspaces in clean, working order. Departments will provide disinfectant (EPA List N registered disinfectants) to enable employees to wipe down the high-touch surfaces in their own workspaces and offices once every (4) hours. Departments may request additional disinfectant supplies through their Pandemic Coordinator, who will work with Department purchasing staff to submit a resource request through Emergency Operations Center Logistics using a EOC Resource Request form found [HERE](#).
- All areas where a COVID-19 symptomatic employees has worked will be cleaned and disinfected.
- In the case of an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 and has been in the workplace, Departments must contact the City's Emergency Operations Center at eoc.manager@phila.gov. The EOC will alert the Department of Public Property who will initiate deep cleaning protocols, as appropriate. Employees will be asked to temporarily relocate while this deep cleaning occurs.
- The following protocols will apply to all City-owned vehicles:
 - City vehicles in use by multiple City-employees must be cleaned and disinfected by the occupant before and after each individual's use.
 - Employees must wear a mask/face covering if there is more than one person in a vehicle.
 - Employees must always sit as far apart as possible in a vehicle and vehicle occupancy should be based on the following best practices:

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- Limit the number of vehicle occupants, when practical
- (2) occupants – Passenger sit in rear opposite the driver, do not utilize front passenger seat
- (3) or more occupants – Alternate seating space by distancing, with at least 3 feet apart when possible
- Prior to entry/reentry, each occupant should clean hands (soap/sanitizer) or wear impervious gloves to reduce potential contamination of surfaces
- When practical, open windows when multiple occupants are in vehicle to ventilate space
- Employees will be reimbursed pursuant to [Administrative Board Rule #2](#) for using private vehicles to travel to job sites if the Departments current fleet levels cannot accommodate socially distancing protocols for vehicle use.

✓ **Planning**

- Departments, through the direction of their Departmental Safety Officer and Human Resource Manager, will continue to follow the current Risk Management protocols on suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the workplace. These protocols will be updated periodically and provided to these groups when updated.
- The City will continue to update its Policy Statement on COVID-19 throughout the course of the pandemic and the City's re-opening. This Policy Statement and all other related policies will be provided through City leadership for prompt dissemination to their employees. HR policies available to all City employees may be found [HERE](#).
- Departments are required to track all costs associated with their response to the Covid-19 pandemic including any unbudgeted expenses related to re-opening their operations in compliance of these guidelines.

✓ **Communicate**

- Each Department will identify a Pandemic Coordinator, who is responsible for helping to educate staff about symptoms and prevention of COVID-19. The Pandemic Coordinator will work with the Office of Risk Management to receive training and communication related to COVID-19 prevention and mitigation in the workplace.
- Prominent signs will be posted throughout common areas within City buildings and in employee break rooms, bathrooms, and lobbies that include such things as the following:
 - Asking people who are sick or have had contact with someone with COVID-19 within the past 14 days not to enter

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- Encouraging people to cover coughs or sneezes
- Mandating social distancing of at least 6 feet
- Mandating that all staff and visitors wear masks
- Providing guidance on handwashing and avoiding “high-touch” areas

The City of Philadelphia print-ready posters that can be found [HERE](#).

- Prior to the re-opening of any City Department or operation, Departments will be responsible for sharing these protocols with their employees.
- For employees and operations working remotely, Departments will be responsible for ensuring all employees working remotely have reviewed the [“Getting Started with Technology”](#) and [“Adapting to Remote Work”](#) sections of the City’s Remote Work site. Additional training and guidance on remote work will be provided periodically to City Departments.